

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

CHRIST IN HIS SANCTUARY

An illustration depicting the sanctuary. On the right, Christ is shown from the chest up, wearing a white robe and a purple sash with a grid of colored stones. He has a beard and is looking towards the center with his right hand raised in a gesture of blessing or prayer. In the center, a golden altar is visible, with a golden censer on top emitting a plume of white smoke. Two golden pillars support the altar. On the left, two angels in white robes are shown in profile, looking towards the center. The entire scene is framed by a circular opening in a purple and gold fabric. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color with a subtle pattern.

ELLEN G. WHITE

Christ in His Sanctuary

Ellen G. White

1969

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Information about this Book

Overview

This eBook is provided by the [Ellen G. White Estate](#). It is included in the larger free [Online Books](#) collection on the Ellen G. White Estate Web site.

About the Author

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) is considered the most widely translated American author, her works having been published in more than 160 languages. She wrote more than 100,000 pages on a wide variety of spiritual and practical topics. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she exalted Jesus and pointed to the Scriptures as the basis of one's faith.

Further Links

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A Compilation from the Writings of Ellen G. White

“The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God.”—[The Great Controversy](#), 488.

“I know that the sanctuary question stands in righteousness and truth, just as we have held it for so many years. It is the enemy that leads minds off on sidetracks. He is pleased when those who know the truth become engrossed in collecting scriptures to pile around erroneous theories, which have no foundation in truth. The scriptures thus used are misapplied; they were not given to substantiate error, but to strengthen truth.”—[Gospel Workers](#), 303.

Contents

Information about this Book	i
The Sanctuary Truth	vii
An Introduction	vii
The End of the 2300 Days	vii
A Truth Established by the Witness of the Holy Spirit	ix
The Sanctuary and the Sabbath	xi
The Sanctuary Truth Under Fire	xii
Points Sustained Only by Misused Scriptures	xv
The Reality of the Heavenly Sanctuary Affirmed	xvi
The Ark and the Law in the Heavenly Sanctuary	xvii
Last-Day Delusions Will Involve Vital Truth	xviii
With Eyes Fixed on the Sanctuary	xix
This Little Book	xx
Christ in the Sacrificial System	21
The Sacred Character of God's Law	22
Man Offers His First Sacrifice	23
Study Questions	24
The Heavenly Sanctuary in Miniature	25
The Tabernacle and Its Construction	27
The Priests and Their Attire	30
The Urim and Thummim	31
The Services of the Sanctuary	32
The Day of Atonement	36
A Figure of Things in the Heavens	37
Cleansed From the Record of Sin	38
Study Questions	39
The Gospel in Type and Antitype	41
Perfect According to the Patterns	41
A Temple of Unrivalled Splendor	42
God Tokens His Acceptance	42
The Antitype Lost Sight Of	43
The Temple Services Lost Their Significance	43
Eyes Turned to the True Sacrifice	44
Our High Priest, Our Advocate	45

Study Questions	46
The Judgment Message Stirs America	47
The Study of the Prophecies	49
The Impact of Bible Chronology	52
The Prophecy of Daniel 8:14	53
The Duty to Tell Others	57
A Religious Awakening Begins	58
Evidences of Divine Blessing	59
The Last of the Signs	60
The Bible and the Bible Only	61
Differing Responses	63
Investigation Discouraged	64
Study Questions	65
Daniel 8:14 and Steps in God’s Mysterious Leadings	67
The Experience of the Apostles Provides an Object Lesson	68
The Lesson of 1844.....	71
Study Questions	74
The End of the 2300 Days	76
Waiting in Calm Expectancy	77
The Scriptures Reexamined	78
Types in the Sanctuary Service	79
Disappointed, But Faith in God’s Word Unshaken	80
Study Questions	82
The Glorious Temple in Heaven	84
Integrity of the Prophetic Periods	84
The Sanctuary of the Old Covenant	86
The New-Covenant Sanctuary in the Heavens	87
The Glories of the Earthly Sanctuary and the Heavenly Temple	87
Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary	88
Determining the Sanctuary of Daniel 8:14	90
Practical Lessons From the Types	91
But a Type of Heavenly Realities	93
The Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary	94
Study Questions	95
Our High Priest in the Holy of Holies	97
Scriptural Foundations	99
Ministry in the Two Apartments	101

The Opening of Another Door	102
The Tragic Result of Rejecting God’s Warning Message . .	104
The Sanctuary and the Sabbath	105
Study Questions	107
Christ’s Closing Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary	109
Whose Cases Considered?	110
God’s Law the Standard	111
Jesus the Advocate	112
The Courtroom Scene	113
The Closing Scenes of the Antitypical Service	115
Judged by the Unerring Records	115
Perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God	117
Now in the Day of Atonement	118
Study Questions	120

The Sanctuary Truth

[2]

An Introduction*

Writing of what must be accomplished by the emerging Seventh-day Adventist Church before the Lord shall come, Ellen G. White in 1883 said:

“The minds of believers were to be directed to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ had entered to make atonement for His people.”—[Selected Messages, 1:67](#).

In a crisis in 1906, in which certain of the basic teachings of Seventh-day Adventists were threatened, she wrote:

“The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith.”—[Evangelism, 221](#).

The End of the 2300 Days

Among the prophecies forming the foundation of the advent awakening of the 1830’s and the early 1840’s was the prophecy of [Daniel 8:14](#): “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Ellen White, who passed through the experience, explains concerning the application of this prophecy:

“In common with the rest of the Christian world, Adventists then held that the earth, or some portion of it, was the sanctuary. They understood that the cleansing of the sanctuary was the purification of the earth by the fires of the last great day, and that this would take place at the second advent. Hence the conclusion that Christ would return to the earth in 1844.”—[The Great Controversy, 409](#).

[4]

This prophetic period came to its close on October 22, 1844. The disappointment to those who expected to meet their Lord on that day was great. Hiram Edson, a careful Bible student in mid-New York

* An introductory chapter prepared in the office of the Ellen G. White Estate, providing the historical setting for the E. G. White chapters and other of her materials selected for the study of the sanctuary truth as understood and taught by Seventh-day Adventists.

State, describes what took place among the company of believers of which he was a part:

“Our expectations were raised high, and thus we looked for our coming Lord until the clock tolled twelve at midnight. The day had then passed, and our disappointment had become a certainty. Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept and wept, till the day dawn....

“I mused in my heart, saying: ‘My advent experience has been the brightest of all my Christian experience.... Has the Bible proved a failure? Is there no God, no heaven, no golden city, no Paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable? Is there no reality to our fondest hopes and expectations?’...

“I began to feel there might be light and help for us in our distress. I said to some of the brethren: ‘Let us go to the barn.’ We entered the granary, shut the doors about us, and bowed before the Lord. We prayed earnestly, for we felt our necessity. We continued in earnest prayer until the witness of the Spirit was given that our prayers were accepted, and that light should be given—our disappointment explained, made clear and satisfactory.

[5] “After breakfast I said to one of my brethren, ‘Let us go and see and encourage some of our brethren.’ We started, and while passing through a large field, I was stopped about midway of the field. Heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly and clearly that instead of our High Priest coming out of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, He, for the first time, entered on that day into the second apartment of that sanctuary, and that He had a work to perform in the most holy place before coming to the earth; that He came to the marriage, or in other words, to the Ancient of Days, to receive a kingdom, dominion, and glory; and that we must wait for His return from the wedding. And my mind was directed to the tenth chapter of Revelation, where I could see the vision had spoken and did not lie.”—Unpublished manuscript published in part in [The Review and Herald, June 23, 1921](#).

There followed a careful investigation of the scriptures that touched on this subject—particularly those in Hebrews—by Hi-

ram Edson and two close associates, Dr. F. B. Hahn, a physician, and O. R. L. Crosier, a teacher. The result of this joint study was written up by Crosier and was published, first in *The Day Dawn*, a paper of limited circulation, and then in rewritten and enlarged form in a special issue of the *Day-Star*, on February 7, 1846. This was a more widely read Adventist journal, published at Cincinnati, Ohio. Through this medium it reached a number of the disappointed Advent believers. The rather lengthy presentation, well supported by Scripture, brought hope and courage to their hearts as it clearly showed that the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days is in heaven, and not on earth, as they had believed earlier.

Ellen G. White, in a statement written on April 21, 1847, declared in endorsement of the Crosier article on the sanctuary question:

“The Lord showed me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the sanctuary, etc.; and that it was His will, that Brother Crosier should write out the view which he gave us in the *Day-Star Extra*, February 7, 1846. I feel fully authorized by the Lord, to recommend that *Extra*, to every saint.”—[A Word to the Little Flock, 12](#).

At a later time she wrote of the rapid development of doctrinal understanding which followed the disappointment:

“The passing of the time in 1844 was a period of great events, opening to our astonished eyes the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, and having decided relation to God’s people upon the earth.” [Manuscript 13, 1889](#), published in [Counsels to Writers and Editors, 30](#). [6]

A Truth Established by the Witness of the Holy Spirit

The visions given to Ellen White, while not running ahead of Bible study, confirmed the soundness of the position that an important phase of Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary was entered upon on October 22, 1844. Gradually the breadth and depth of the subject opened before the Advent believers. Looking back on the experience in later years, she recalled their study and the manifest evidences of God’s guiding hand:

“Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce,* Elder [Hiram] Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, ‘We can do nothing more,’ the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall [7] enter the City of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.

“During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I was in this condition of mind until all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God. The brethren knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given .”—[Selected Messages, 1:206, 207](#).

The realization that Christ had entered the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary to begin His closing ministry in our behalf, typified in the sanctuary service observed by Israel of old, solemnized the hearts of our pioneer Adventists. The truths were so clear, so grand, so vital, that it was difficult to sense that upon them rested the responsibility of imparting this light to others. Ellen White wrote of the certainty of their position:

*Older brethren among the pioneers are here thus reminiscently referred to. “Father Pierce” was Stephen Pierce, who served in ministerial and administrative work in the early days.

“We are to be established in the faith, in the light of the truth given us in our early experience. At that time one error after another pressed in upon us; ministers and doctors brought in new doctrines. We would search the Scriptures with much prayer, and the Holy Spirit would bring the truth to our minds. Sometimes whole nights would be devoted to searching the Scriptures, and earnestly asking God for guidance. Companies of devoted men and women assembled for this purpose. The power of God would come upon me, and I was enabled clearly to define what is truth and what is error.

“As the points of our faith were thus established, our feet were placed upon a solid foundation. We accepted the truth point by point, under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. I would be taken off in vision, and explanations would be given me. I was given illustrations of heavenly things, and of the sanctuary, so that we were placed where light was shining on us in clear, distinct rays.

“I know that the sanctuary question stands in righteousness and truth, just as we have held it for so many years.”—[Gospel Workers](#), 302, 303. [8]

The pioneers of the movement saw the sanctuary truth as basic to the whole structure of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. James White, in 1850, republished the essential portions of the first presentation of the subject by O. R. L. Crosier, and commented:

“The subject of the sanctuary should be carefully examined, as it lies at the foundation of our faith and hope.”—*The Advent Review* (special combined number).

The Sanctuary and the Sabbath

It was in the setting of a view of the heavenly sanctuary that the Sabbath truth was confirmed in the vision given to Ellen White on April 3, 1847, at the Howland home in Topsham, Maine. Of this she writes:

“We felt an unusual spirit of prayer. And as we prayed the Holy Ghost fell upon us. We were very happy. Soon I was lost to earthly things and was wrapped in a vision of God’s glory. I saw an angel flying swiftly to me. He quickly carried me from the earth to the Holy City. In the city I saw a temple, which I entered. I passed through a door before I came to the first veil. This veil was raised,

and I passed into the holy place. Here I saw the altar of incense, the candlestick with seven lamps, and the table on which was the shewbread. After viewing the glory of the holy, Jesus raised the second veil and I passed into the holy of holies.

[9] “In the holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it was purest gold. On each end of the ark was a lovely cherub, with its wings spread out over it. Their faces were turned toward each other, and they looked downward. Between the angels was a golden censer. Above the ark, where the angels stood, was an exceeding bright glory, that appeared like a throne where God dwelt. Jesus stood by the ark, and as the saints’ prayers came up to Him, the incense in the censer would smoke, and He would offer up their prayers with the smoke of the incense to His Father. In the ark was the golden pot of manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of stone which folded together like a book. Jesus opened them, and I saw the Ten Commandments written on them with the finger of God. On one table were four, and on the other six. The four on the first table shone brighter than the other six. But the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God’s holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it. I saw that the Sabbath commandment was not nailed to the cross. If it was, the other nine commandments were; and we are at liberty to break them all, as well as to break the fourth. I saw that God had not changed the Sabbath, for He never changes.”—[Early Writings, 32, 33](#).

The Sanctuary Truth Under Fire

While there were those who saw clearly the binding claims of God’s law and began to observe the Seventh-day Sabbath as set forth in the law of God, they encountered strong opposition. Of this and the reasons for it, Ellen White explains:

“Many and earnest were the efforts made to overthrow their faith. None could fail to see that if the earthly sanctuary was a figure or pattern of the heavenly, the law deposited in the ark on earth was an exact transcript of the law in the ark in heaven; and that an acceptance of the truth concerning the heavenly sanctuary involved an acknowledgment of the claims of God’s law, and the obligation

of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Here was the secret of the bitter and determined opposition to the harmonious exposition of the Scriptures that revealed the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.”—[The Great Controversy, 435](#).

It is little wonder that those in subsequent years defecting from the Seventh-day Adventist Church should make the sanctuary truth a point of opposition. It was so with Elders Snook and Brinkerhof, conference officers in Iowa, who withdrew in the middle 1860’s, and with D. M. Canright, an influential minister, who left the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1887 to become a bitter enemy and critic. Nor is it strange that the pantheistic views at the turn of the century, espoused and advocated by both medical and ministerial workers, should strike directly at this fundamental doctrine. It was in this setting that Ellen White in warning words wrote on November 20, 1905:

[10]

“To those medical missionaries and ministers who have been drinking in the scientific sophistries and bewitching fables against which you have been warned, I would say, Your souls are in peril. The world must know where you are standing and where Seventh-day Adventists are standing. God calls for all who have accepted these soul-destroying delusions no longer to halt between two opinions. If the Lord be God, follow Him.

“Satan, with all his host is on the battlefield. Christ’s soldiers are now to rally round the bloodstained banner of Emmanuel. In the name of the Lord, leave the black banner of the prince of darkness, and take your position with the Prince of heaven.

“‘He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.’ Read your Bibles. From higher ground, under the instruction given me of God, I present these things before you. The time is near when the deceptive powers of satanic agencies will be fully developed. On one side is Christ, who has been given all power in heaven and earth. On the other side is Satan, continually exercising his power to allure, to deceive with strong, spiritualistic sophistries, to remove God out of the place that He should occupy in the minds of men.

“Satan is striving continually to bring in fanciful suppositions in regard to the sanctuary, degrading the wonderful representations of God and the ministry of Christ for our salvation into something that suits the carnal mind. He removes its presiding power from

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